



仲月 和伸

Rurouni Kenshin

SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Story & Art by

Nobuhiro Watsuki

volume

21



和月伸宏

NOBUHIRO WATSUKI



HER NAME IS GINRIN 3

THE PAIN IN MY BUTT HAS GONE AWAY (REFERRING TO THE PREVIOUS VOLUME), SO I AM CYCLING ONCE AGAIN. YAY! YAY! WHENEVER I AM NOT WRITING, I RIDE AT LEAST 20 TO 30 MINUTES EACH DAY. IT'S FAR FROM ADEQUATE EXERCISE, BUT MOVING MY BODY MAKES ME FEEL AS THOUGH MY PHYSICAL CONDITION IS GETTING BETTER. THE OTHER DAY I GOT CARRIED AWAY AND TRIED TO REACH MACH SPEED, FELL OVER, SCRAPED MY KNEE, AND BLED. I'M LIKE...A KINDERGARTNER?!

Rurouni Kenshin, which has found fans not only in Japan but around the world, first made its appearance in 1992, as an original short story in *Weekly Shonen Jump Special*. Later rewritten and published as a regular, continuing *Jump* series in 1994, *Rurouni Kenshin* ended serialization in 1999 but continued in popularity, as evidenced by the 2000 publication of *Yahiko no Sakabatô* ("Yahiko's Reversed-Edge Sword") in *Weekly Shonen Jump*. His most current work, *Busô Renkin* ("Armored Alchemist"), began publication in June 2003, also in *Jump*.

RUROUNI KENSIN
VOL. 21: AND SO, TIME PASSED
The **SHONEN JUMP** Graphic Novel Edition

STORY AND ART BY
NOBUHIRO WATSUKI

English Adaptation/Pancha Diaz
Translation/Kenichiro Yagi
Touch-Up Art & Lettering/Steve Dutro
Design/Matt Hinrichs
Editor/Kit Fox

Managing Editor/Elizabeth Kawasaki
Director of Production/Noboru Watanabe
Vice President of Publishing/Alvin Lu
Vice President & Editor in Chief/Yumi Hoashi
Sr. Director of Acquisitions/Rika Inouye
Vice President of Sales & Marketing/Liza Coppola
Publisher/Hyoe Narita

RUROUNI KENSIN © 1994 by Nobuhiro Watsuki. All rights reserved. First published in Japan in 1994 by SHUEISHA Inc., Tokyo. English translation rights in the United States of America and Canada arranged by SHUEISHA Inc. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this publication are entirely fictional.

No portion of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission from the copyright holders.

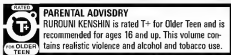
Printed in the U.S.A.

Published by VIZ Media, LLC
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107

SHONEN JUMP Graphic Novel Edition
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
First printing, November 2005



www.viz.com



SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Rurouni Kenshin™

STORY & ART BY NOBUHIRO WATSUKI



MEIJI SWORDSMAN ROMANTIC STORY
Vol. 21: AND SO, TIME PASSED

Once he was *hitokiri*, an assassin, called *Battōsai*. His name was legend among the pro-Imperialist or "patriot" warriors who launched the Meiji Era. Now, *Himura Kenshin* is *ruromi*, a wanderer, and carries a reversed-edge *sakabatō* to prohibit himself from killing.

雪代 緑



Yukishiro Enishi

雪代 (緋村) 巴



Yukishiro (Himura) Tomoe

THUS FAR

Kenshin and his friends return to Tokyo after a deadly battle to defeat Shishio Makoto and his ambitions of conquering Japan. However, their peace is short lived as those with grudges against Battōsai gather for revenge, attacking Makabe, Makawana Dojo, and police chief Iwamura's house. To make matters worse, Kenshin finds out that the mastermind of this new attack is Enishi, the brother of Kenshin's deceased wife Tomoe. Enishi confronts Kenshin and declares that he will lead an assault on Kamiya Dojo in ten days. Kenshin decides that although he can never fully atone for his crimes, he will fight to protect the present, and begins by telling the story of his past to his friends.

The time is Bakumatsu, Kenshin is wielding his sword for the "New Era." Tomoe, who got her name killed by Kenshin, joins the "Yamitadori" and approaches Kenshin to uncover his weakness. To her surprise, Tomoe comes to care for Kenshin. But the Yamitadori, who had this in mind from the beginning, capture Tomoe in order to lure Kenshin into the "Binding Forest." Although the evil forest dulls his senses, Kenshin continues to defeat his opponents—but not without consequences. Before his opponents die, explosions damage Kenshin's hearing and vision. Kenshin finally reaches the location where Tomoe is being held, and now faces the last of the Yamitadori. But...?

神谷 薫



Kamiya Kaoru

相楽 左之助



Sagara Sanosuke

明神 弥彦



Myōjin Yahiko

緋村 剣心 (人斬り 抜刀流)



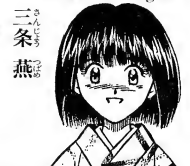
Himura Kenshin (Hitokiri Battōsai)

高荷 恵



Takani Megumi

三条 燕



Sanjo Tsubame



C

A

S

T



CONTENTS

RUROUNI KENSHIN

Meiji Swordsman Romantic Story
BOOK TWENTY-ONE: AND SO, TIME PASSED

ACT 178
Remembrance 13:
Cross-shaped Scar
7

ACT 179
Remembrance 14:
And So, Time Passed
27

ACT 180
Night Fell...
47

ACT 181
A Strand of Hope
67

ACT 182
Confession (Part 1)
87

ACT 183
Confession (Part 2)
107

ACT 184
Fireworks
127

ACT 185
Vs. the Armstrong Cannon
147

ACT 186
Neo-Invulnerable Gauntlets
167





TAKE THIS!
MUTEKI-RYU
MARTIAL-
ARTS!

GOFUBAKU
(MIGHTY AXE
EXPLOSION)
!!!

GAH!!



HEH
INJURED
ALL OVER AND HEH...
WEAK WITH FATIGUE,
AND YOUR INTUITION,
HEARING, AND
VISION ARE ALL
IMPAIRED.

CRAA

AND MY
MUTEKI-
RYU!!

THERE
IS NO
WAY YOU
WILL -

!!



BOOSH



BOOSH



I SEE...

ALTHOUGH
MY BODY
AND SENSES
DO NOT WORK
NORMALLY...

...IT IS
ENOUGH TO
DRAW FULL
CONCENTRA-
TION AT THE
MOMENT OF
CONTACT.

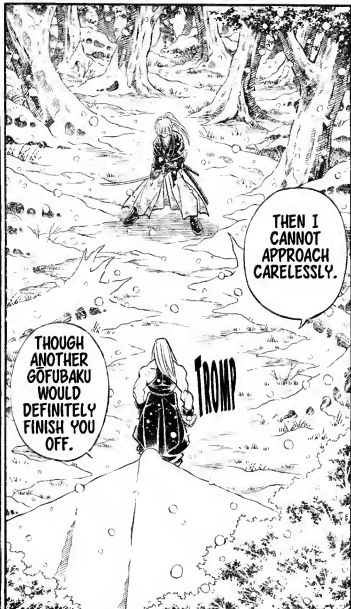
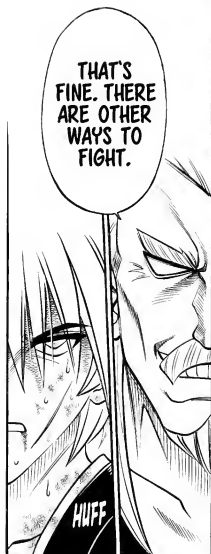
HUFF

HUFF

WIZZY...

HUFF

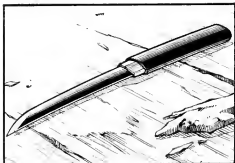




Act 178

**Remem-
brance
13:
Cross-
shaped
Scar**

仲伸
月宏



WHAT
WAS I...



...



...DOING
...?

WHAT
WAS
I...



THAT'S —



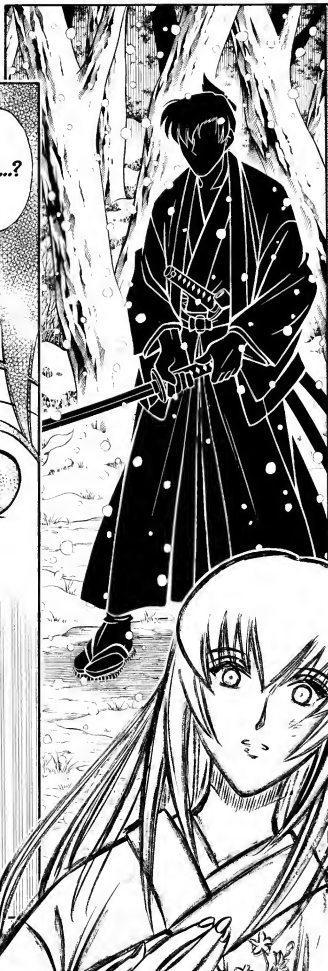
THAT'S

TP



SOMEONE
IS
FIGHTING...?







I LET
HIM DIE
BY NOT
STOPPING
HIM...

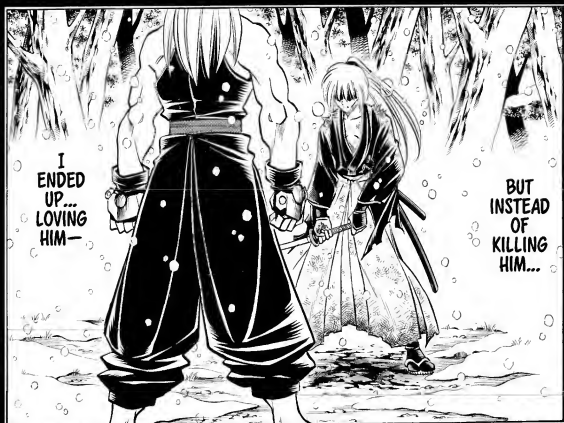


OH...
YES...



...AND GAVE
MYSELF
AWAY TO
GET HIM
KILLED...





I
ENDED
UP...
LOVING
HIM—

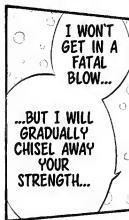
BUT
INSTEAD
OF
KILLING
HIM...



AND—

I
CAN'T
HAVE
HIM DIE
AGAIN...





I WON'T
GET IN A
FATAL
BLOW...

...BUT I WILL
GRADUALLY
CHISEL AWAY
YOUR
STRENGTH...

BY WEARING
YOU DOWN,
REPEATEDLY
HITTING YOU,
NEVER GETTING
TOO CLOSE
TO YOU...

HOW'S
THAT?



PLUS...



AND IN YOUR
PRESENT
STATE, YOU
CAN'T DO A
THING...





THE
"FOURTH
BINDING" TO
TAKE AWAY YOUR
SENSE OF
TOUCH IS NOW
COMPLETE—

...SEVERE
BLOOD LOSS
AND THE
EXTREMELY
COLD
WEATHER...

...RENDERS
YOUR BODY
COMPLETELY
NUMB...

YOU
HAVE NO
CHANCE
OF
WINNING...
...BUT
YOU
HAVE
FOUGHT
WELL UP
TO NOW...

...OR THE
INSTANT
DEATH OF
A FATAL
BLOW...

DEATH
CHIPPING
AWAY
AT YOU.
BLOW BY
BLOW...

THE REALM WE
REACH THROUGH
DECADES OF
BATTLES...
ALLOWING
US TO OUTDO
ANY PROMISING
NEWCOMER.



IT IS
CALLED
"CUNNING."

DO YOU
THINK
I'M A
COWARD?

THERE'S
NOTHING
WRONG WITH
THAT.



THIS
IS THE
STRONGEST
WEAPON
OF A
SEASONED
WARRIOR—

I GIVE
YOU THE
CHOICE.





THAT
MAY BE
TRUE...

...I
HAVE NO
CHANCE
OF
WINNING
...

BUT—

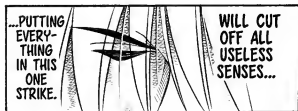


I CAN
AT LEAST
TAKE HIM
WITH ME!!

GRIP



...YOU
CHOOSE AN
INSTANT
DEATH...



...PUTTING
EVERY-
THING
IN THIS
ONE
STRIKE.

WILL CUT
OFF ALL
USELESS
SENSES...



...AND ACHIEVE
HAPPINESS...

PLEASE
LIVE IN
THE NEW
ERA...

I'M
SORRY
TOMOE...





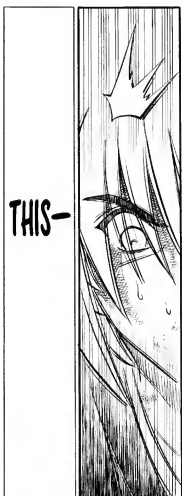
HAH,
COME—



GRIP



READY
!!



THIS—



AHHH!
AHHH!
AHHH!





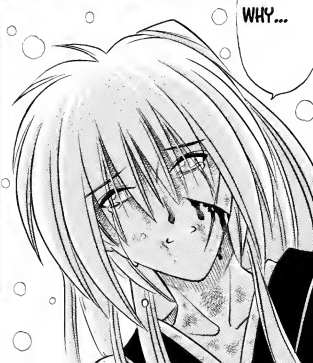
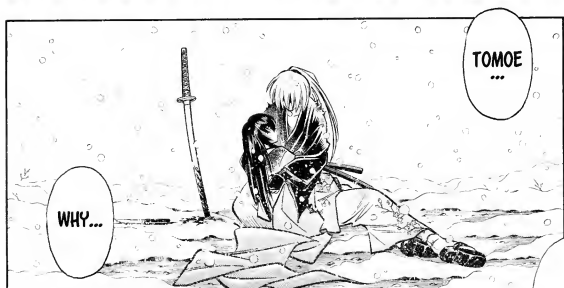
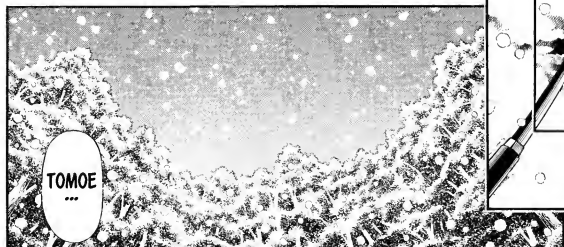
THIS
SCENT
...



...OF
HAKUBAI...
KŌ—

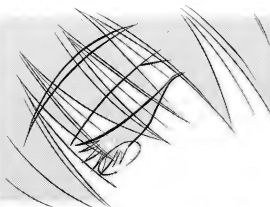








THIS IS THE WAY IT SHOULD BE...SO PLEASE DON'T CRY...



Rurouni Kenshin



TOMOE...

THIS IS
NOT THE
WAY IT
SHOULD
BE...

THAT
CAN'T
BE...

THIS
IS THE
WAY IT
SHOULD
BE...
SO
PLEASE
DON'T
CRY...

THERE IS NO
WAY YOU
SHOULD DIE!

I SHOULD BE
THE ONE TO
DIE, THE
HITOKIRI!

Act 179
Remembrance 14:
And So, Time Passed



Act 179

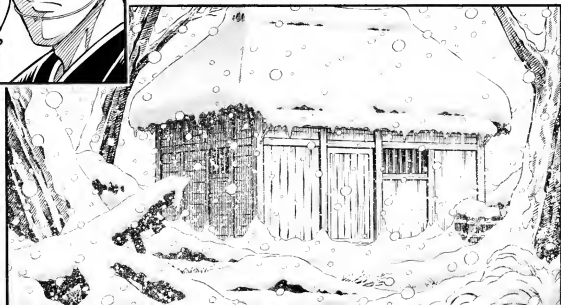
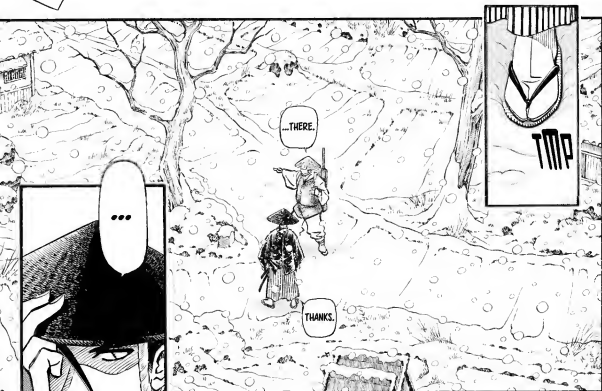
Remembrance
14:
And So,
Time
Passed

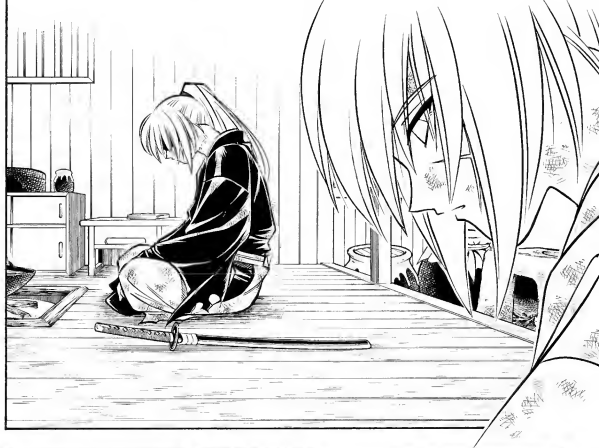


Jan
1st

Jan
15th

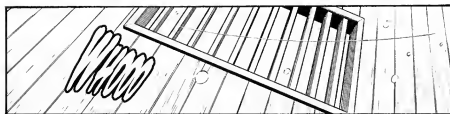
Jan
7th



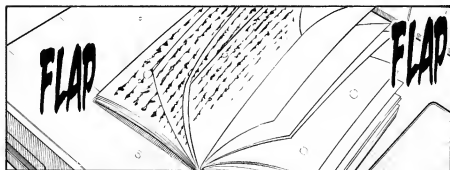


HOW...
WHY...

NO MATTER
HOW MUCH
I THINK, I
DON'T GET IT.



TOMOE...

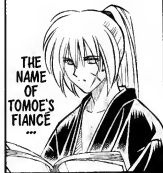


TOMOE'S...
...DIARY...



...KIYOSATO...

THE
NAME
OF
TOMOE'S
FIANCE
...



April 4th

News of the murder of
Kiyosato Akira-Sama
arrives from Kyoto.
I simply could not
believe it, and regret
not stopping him
from leaving, but it
is all too late...

IT
WAS...

...IT
SOUNDS
VAGUELY
FAMILIAR
...



IT
WAS...

News of the murder of
Kiyosato Akira-Sama
arrives from Kyoto.





TO...

TO...MO...E!

I
ROBBED HER
OF HER
HAPPINESS...!!

I WAS
THE ONE
WHO KILLED
TOMOE'S
FIANCE...!



TOMOE...



IT IS
UNFORTUNATE
THAT YOU
WERE THE
ONE WHO
KILLED
TOMOE'S
FIANCE...

...AND
IT IS
UNFORTUNATE
THAT YOU
FELL IN LOVE
WITH HER...

I
KILLED
HIM!!!

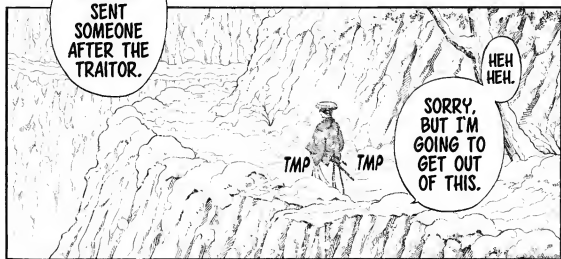




I
HEARD
THE
STORY...



BUT TWO
UNFORTUNATE
FACTS JUST
HAPPENED
TO COME
TOGETHER...
IT IS
NOT YOUR
RESPONSIBILITY.



I'VE
ALREADY
SENT
SOMEONE
AFTER THE
TRAITOR.

HEH
HEH.

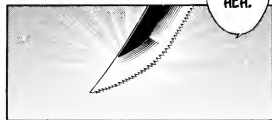
SORRY,
BUT I'M
GOING TO
GET OUT
OF THIS.

TMP TMP



EH?

HEH
HEH
HEH.



THESE
ARE MORE
DEPENDABLE
THAN THE
SWORD...

THE
SHOGUNATE
OR THE
REVOLUTION-
ISTS—THERE
IS NO FUTURE
FOR THE
SAMURAI, NO
MATTER WHO
WINS.



...HEH,
THAT'S THE
KOGORO I
KNOW...HE
WON'T LET
ME GO IN
PEACE.



I HAVE
NO CHOICE.
I'LL HAVE
TO DEPEND
ON THIS
SWORD...



...AGAIN
!!



NY

EHHH



THE
ONE WHO WILL
TAKE THIS
COUNTRY IS NOT
THE SHOGUNATE
OR THE
REVOLUTIONARIES...

AH WELL.
I'LL MAKE
THEM
UNDERSTAND.

THEY'VE
UNDERESTIMATED
ME, GIVING
ME SUCH AN
EASY FIRST
ASSIGNMENT.



IT
WILL
BE
I...!

...WHICH
MEANS
I'M NO
LONGER
NECESSARY.

HE WILL
BE TAKING
CARE OF
ASSASSINA-
TIONS
FROM
NOW ON.



SHISHIO
MAKOTO...

HE IS A
DANGEROUS
MAN, BUT HIS
SKILLS ARE
EQUAL TO
YOURS.

...YES...HIS
BACKGROUND
AND STYLE IS
UNKNOWN.

I NEED YOU
TO WIELD
YOUR SWORD
NOW MORE
THAN EVER.



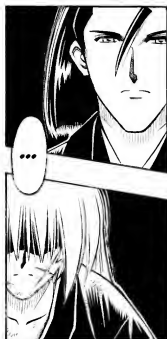
NO...

...TO
PROTECT
REVOLUTION-
ARIES
IN THE
FRONT
LINE.

HIMURA, I
WILL HAVE
YOU WORK
AS A "FREE-
WHEELING
SWORDS-
MAN"...

SOMEONE
MUST
WIELD A
SWORD TO
COUNTER
THEM, OR
ALL IS
LOST...

IN KYOTO,
THE HUNT FOR
REVOLUTIONISTS
AND OTHERS
BY THE
SHINSENGUMI
GETS WORSE
AND WORSE...



...AND
WIELD
THE HITEN
SWORD.

PLEASE,
BECOME A
DEMON
FOR THE
MOMENT...

I
UNDER-
STAND
IT IS
DIFFICULT
FOR
YOU RIGHT
NOW...

...BUT
THERE IS
NOBODY ELSE
WE CAN
TRUST THIS
DUTY TO.



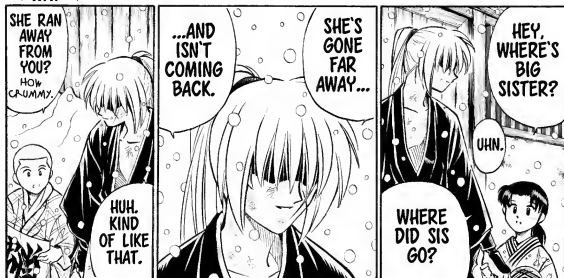
LET'S
GO KITE
FLYING
TODAY!
EVEN
THOUGH IT'S
SNOWING.

YOU
WON'T PLAY
WITH US?
TODAY'S NO
GOOD?





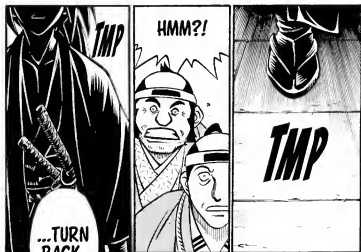






THERE
THEY
ARE!

AFTER
THEM!!

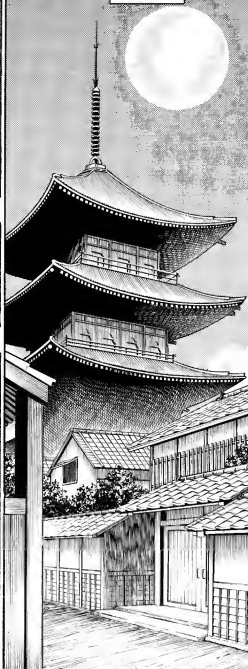


...TURN
BACK.

HMM?!

TMP

THEN...





R-RED
HAIR AND
A CROSS-
SHAPED
SCAR ON
HIS LEFT
CHEEK!!

HITOKIRI
BATTŌSAI
-!!

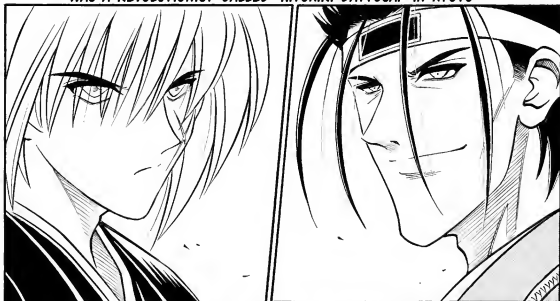
COULD
HE BE...

IF YOU
TURN BACK,
YOUR LIVES
WILL BE
SPARED.

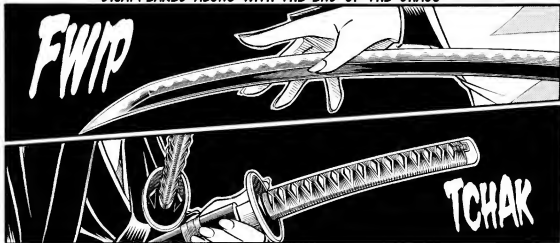
IF YOU
DO NOT...

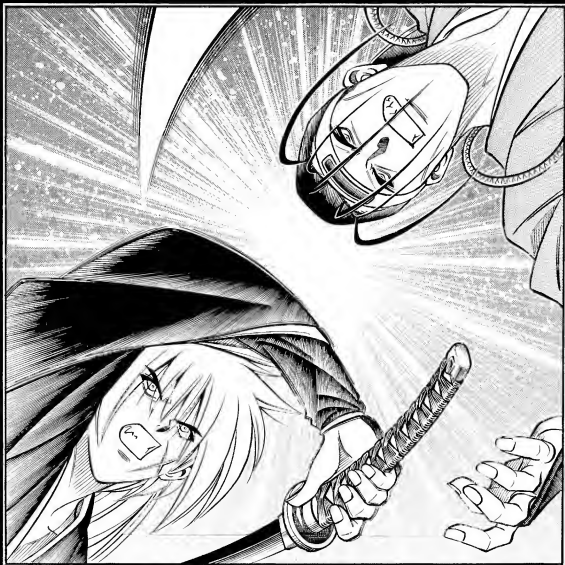


IN THE PAST...IN THE MIDST OF THE CHAOS OF BAKUMATSU, THERE WAS A REVOLUTIONIST CALLED "HITOKIRI BATTÔSAI" IN KYOTO—



THE MAN, WHO KILLED AS THOUGH HE WERE THE DEVIL HIMSELF, DISAPPEARED ALONG WITH THE END OF THE CHAOS—





AND SO, TIME
PASSED TO THE
11TH YEAR OF
MEIJI.

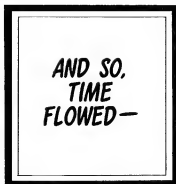
The Secret Life of Characters (41) —Yukishiro (Himura) Tomoe—

I really don't want to say much about her, but "without lies and deception—no hiding" is the intent of this corner, so I will talk. There was originally no model for Tomoe. The plot for the remembrance episodes was already finished before the series started, and at that point, Tomoe was just going to be a "super beautiful woman whose intent was unclear." To put it simply, "cool beauty." (By the way, when I talked to a friend about this cool beauty concept, he laughed hard. Maybe my idea of a cool beauty is off?) During the three and a half years until she appeared, there was nothing concrete other than what is stated above, and she became an Ayanami look-alike from Eva. The basics of drama are the expression of emotions and changes in emotions, but a cool beauty is a cool beauty because she does not reveal her emotions. I didn't realize the important fact that once she revealed her true feelings, it negated all of this, thus turning her into a completely different character towards the end. On top of that, the way she dies is the same way Yumi died. I am not only regretting what I made her into, but also feel disgusted with myself for it. However, it was fun, during the first half, to portray her as a cool beauty. And I do like the character itself, so I would like to bring her back in a different series. At that time, she will be Watsuki's original cool beauty...

Her design, as stated above, turned into an Ayanami look-alike. The only thing original about her is the black pupil, which I put in because I thought, "This way it is easier to create an effect of not knowing her true feelings." But, that's it. To be honest, after doing this series at full tilt for four years, the will, energy, and time to develop my senses rather than just using them—and to nurture a good idea or material, making it my original—are very lacking. Tomoe is a character that reflects my state right now. I am painfully aware that there is a need for me to find a different way to write manga, and am already on the search. For those of you who are angry about Tomoe's character, I would be honored if you would stick with Watsuki's manga a little longer.



1864	GENJI (1864-1865)	○ IKEDA-YA INCIDENT ○ KINMON INCIDENT ○ ENGLAND, FRANCE, USA, HOLLAND ATTACK SHIMONOSEKI WITH CANNON FIRE
1865		○ THE FIRST CHŌSHŪ SUBJUGATION ○ THE SECOND CHŌSHŪ SUBJUGATION
1866	KEIŌ (1865-1868)	○ EDO, OSAKA ○ SAKAMOTO RYŌMA SATSUMA-CHŌSHŪ
1867		
1868		○ TOKUGAWA TAKAYOSHI RETURNS POWER TO THE EMPEROR ○ THE OFFICIAL RETURN OF POWER TO THE EMPEROR
1869	MEIJI (1868-1912)	○ BOSHIN WAR BEGINS ○ THE MEIJI EMPEROR SUBMITS HIS FIVE LAWS ○ BOSHIN WAR ENDS



Act 180

Night Fell...





TAKASUGI SHINSAKU PUSHES HIS DISEASED BODY TO COMMAND THE CHOSHU ARMY. LIKE A GOD OF WAR, HE LEADS THEM TO VICTORY, BUT PASSES AWAY TWO YEARS LATER WITHOUT SEEING THE REVOLUTION COME TRUE.

HE LEFT BEHIND THE POEM, "TO MAKE INTERESTING AN OTHERWISE BORING WORLD..."

HE WAS ABLE TO COMPLETE ONLY THE FIRST HALF OF THE POEM.

FOUNDING
YEAR OF
KEIŌ. THE
SECOND
CHOSHU
SUBJUGATION.

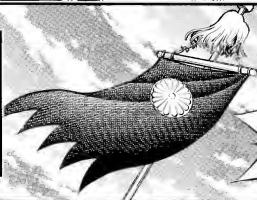
SAITŌ HAJIME LEAVES THE MAIN SHINSENGUMI UNIT DURING THE AIZU WAR, FIGHTING UNTIL THE END. AFTER THE REVOLUTION, HE JOINS THE AIZU, ENLISTING IN THE BATTŌ ARMY DURING THE SEINAN WAR. LATER, HE LIVES AS THE POLICEMAN FUJITA GORŌ.

THE SHINSENGUMI KEPT FIGHTING FURTHER AND FURTHER NORTH, LEADING TO THE FIFTH GREAT BATTLE IN HAKODATE, BATTLING IT OUT AND DIMINISHING...



4TH YEAR
OF KEIŌ
(FOUNDING
YEAR OF
MEIJI).
BOSHIN WAR.

AT THE
BATTLE OF
TOBA-FUSHIMI
IN THE MIDST
OF ALL THIS—



THE
SHŌGUNATE
ARMY IS
RETRREATING
!!



IT'S THE
BEGINNING
OF A
NEW
ERA!!

ALL
RIGHT, WE
WON-!!



RIGHT...

TMP



HIMURA, COME
HERE!! THE
SHINSENGUMI
FOURTH UNIT
IS STILL
FIGHTING
STRONG IN
FUSHIMI!!



I CAN
FINALLY...

...IT'S
OVER...





ENISHI!!

IS THAT
THE FORM
OF YOUR
"PAIN"...?

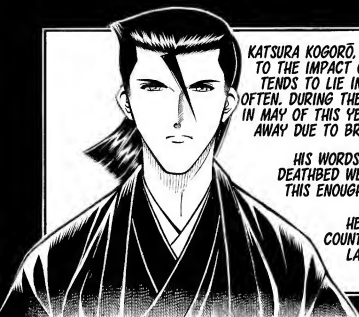
PURE
WHITE
HAIR...

...ENISHI...

WHAT'S
THE
MATTER?

IT WON'T
BE OVER
ANYTIME
SOON...

...IT'S
NOT
OVER...



KATSURA KOGORŌ, PERHAPS DUE TO THE IMPACT ON BUSINESS, TENDS TO LIE IN BED MORE OFTEN. DURING THE SEINAN WAR, IN MAY OF THIS YEAR, HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO BRAIN DISEASE.

HIS WORDS AT HIS DEATHBED WERE, "ISN'T THIS ENOUGH, SAIGŌ."

HE WAS WORRIED ABOUT HIS COUNTRY'S FUTURE UNTIL THE VERY LAST MOMENT OF HIS LIFE...

10TH YEAR OF MEIJI.
SAIGŌ TAKAMORI STANDS UP. THE SEINAN WAR.



HOWEVER, THIS BATTLE IS NOT MENTIONED IN HISTORY...

11TH YEAR OF MEIJI.
SHISHIO MAKOTO REVOLTS.

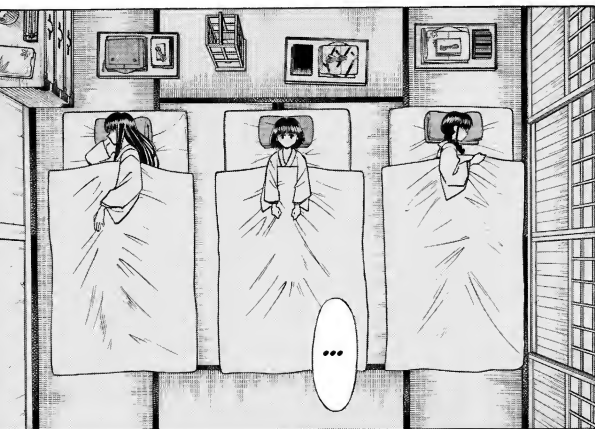
TWO MONTHS LATER...



NOT ONE
OF THEM
SAID A
WORD...

...AND
EVERYONE
DISMISSED
THEMSELVES
ABOUT AN
HOUR LATER.

SILENCE...





...IT'S NOT
REALLY
ABOUT
THAT.
UM...

OH, NO...
WELL, THAT
IS PART
OF IT, BUT...



I'M SORRY
YOU GOT
INVOLVED
IN THIS.

IT'S ONLY
NATURAL...
YOU MUST BE
FRIGHTENED.



ARE
BOTH SO
UNFORTUNATE...

KENSHIN-
SAN AND...

...TOMOE-
SAN...

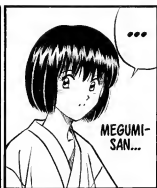


TO BE ABLE
TO DIE
PROTECTING
THE ONE SHE
LOVED...

SHE
LITERALLY
"LOVED TO
DEATH"...IT
DOESN'T
SEEM BAD.



IS
TOMOE-SAN
UNFORTUNATE
...?





IF
KENSIN
WASN'T
THE ONE
WHO KILLED
KIYOSATO-
SAN...



IF
KIYOSATO-
SAN
NEVER
MET
KENSIN...



YOU
SEEM TO
BE VERY
UNDER-
STANDING
OF HER.



I
THINK
TOMOE-
SAN WAS
A PERSON
WITH GREAT
INTEGRITY
...



!



I DIDN'T
MEAN TO
BE...

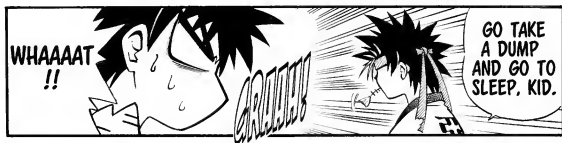


!

THAT'S
WHY SHE WAS
NOT ONLY UNABLE
TO CHOOSE
BETWEEN THE
TWO, BUT WASN'T
EVEN ABLE TO
COMPARE
THEM...







...DON'T GET
BETWEEN
KENSHIN
AND ENISHI.

IF THAT
HAPPENS
...

THAT
WAS MY
INTENTION
FROM THE
START!!

YAHIKO, EVEN
YOU MAY HAVE
TO FIGHT IN
TEN DAYS.

KRAACH

WHATEVER THE
OUTCOME IS, THERE'S
NO POINT TO IT
UNLESS THEY DECIDE
ON THEIR OWN.

THIS COMING BATTLE
IS TOTALLY DIFFERENT
FROM THE ONE AGAINST
SHISHIO, WHICH INVOLVED
THE COUNTRY. THIS
IS "PERSONAL."

IF
YOU CALL
YOURSELF
A MAN,
DO NOT
INTERRUPT.

EVEN IF
IT MEANS
KENSHIN'S
DEATH—



AHH!



ALL RIGHT!
THEN I
BETTER GET
TRAINING
ON THE
SECRET!

THAT'S
THE
SPIRIT.





BY
CROSSING
YOUR HANDS
IN FRONT
OF YOUR
HEAD?

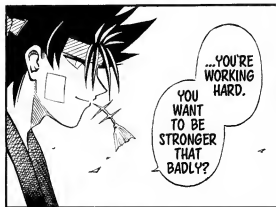


I DON'T GET IT,
BUT KAORU SAID
IF I DO THIS
10,000 TIMES,
SHE'LL TEACH ME
THE SECRET
MOVE.



IS THAT
SOME NEW
GAME?

I SAID
I'M
TRAINING
!!



...YOU'RE
WORKING
HARD.

YOU
WANT
TO BE
STRONGER
THAT
BADLY?



AFTER
HEARING
KENSIN'S
PAST, I
FINALLY
UNDER-
STAND.

YEAH.

...



...AND
LEARN
THE
SECRET!!

SO I'M
GOING TO
DO THIS
10,000
TIMES
IN THE
NEXT TEN
DAYS...

I WANT
TO BE
STRONGER...

...IN THE
TRUEST
SENSE.

WITH MEDIOCRE
FEELINGS OF
NOT WANTING
TO HOLD
PEOPLE BACK...

...OR NOT
WANTING
TO BE THE
WEAK ONE...

...I WILL NEVER
REACH THAT
HEIGHT, NO
MATTER WHAT
I TRY...

THE
STRENGTH
THAT I
ADMIRE IN
KENSIN...

THAT'S
NOT JUST
THE POWER
OF HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYÜ...

...BUT
COMES FROM
LIVING THROUGH
PAIN AND ANGUISH
GREATER THAN
DEATH ITSELF.



THEN
I WILL
FOLLOW IN
KENSIN'S
FOOTSTEPS
...

...AND SEE,
REFLECTED IN
MY EYES, THE
WEAK OR
UNHAPPY THAT
I HAVE
PROTECTED.

...IT'S WAY
IN THE
FUTURE.

HEE



NOW
THAT
I'VE SAID
THAT...

NOW...

GRRRR
!!

OR
ELSE
NOBODY
WILL
BELIEVE
YOU.

YOU SHOULD
HOLD YOUR
HEAD UP AND
GIVE OUT A
HOWLING
LAUGH.

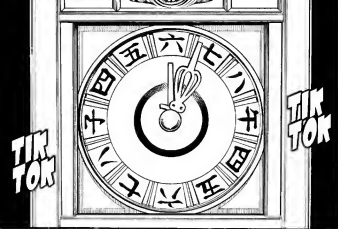
HE MAY...
BE ONE
WHO CAN
MAKE THAT
COME TRUE.

WHEN YOU
LAUGH AND
STATE YOUR
DREAMS...

AAARGH!!

WHY THE
DOPEY
SMILE?





The Secret Life of Characters (42) —Katsura Kogorō and Takasugi Shinsaku—

The two huge Chōshū stars of the Bakumatsu that everyone knows. They have already appeared in many works in different forms, both taking off on their own directions. So, what are their forms in *Ruro-Ken*? They are “the intellectual Katsura, and the free Takasugi,” the most orthodox forms they take. Watsuki has the image of Katsura as a strategist, who has more deep thoughts and calculations, and of Takasugi as a snappy madman. But since the remembrance episodes are centered on the story of Kenshin and Tomoe, those were all cut out. Reading back, I regret that they seem too bland and lacking in flavor.

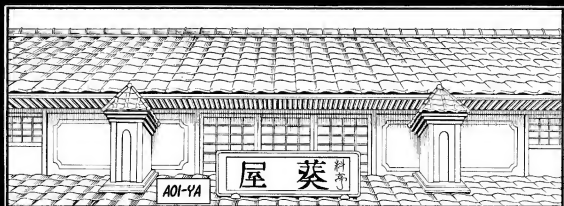
If I ever have a chance to write something really set in the Bakumatsu, I would like to bring out the Katsura and Takasugi I have imagined. A violent and picturesque pair that will bring in many letters of objections, like the time Saitō first appeared.

In terms of design, I quickly drafted Katsura from photos remaining of him, but adjusting to make him a gentle, good-looking man with an accent added by the forelock. Like I have stated above, I just meant to make him the most orthodox image, but Takei-sensei of *Shaman King* complimented it, saying, “A great design with the simple forelock adding to the character expression,” which made me happy, but at the same time a little embarrassed. The senses of each individual person are not to be taken lightly.

Takasugi is made of a rejected design for Nagaoaka Mikio in volume five. When I created this design for Nagaoaka, I felt, “He’s too wild and cool! Too good to use for a villain,” and switched it out. When looked at closely, they look very much alike. I had actually wanted to use it for a brotherly figure in my next work, but I thought “Why not?” and went free falling with it. Recently, I tend to like these wild outlaw types more than the gentle good-looking types.

I am a bit tired of drawing the good-looking types for now.





Act 181

A Strand of Hope

伸
和
月
宏



CHIRP
CHIRP

THE
LONG
DAY
HAS
PASSED—



OH.

YOU'RE
UP
EARLY.

NINE...

...MORE
DAYS...



I WAS
RUNNING
OUT OF
INGREDIENTS,
SO I GOT
SOME MORE.

WELL.

GEIN-
SAN.

WHERE
DID YOU GO
SO EARLY
IN THE
MORNING?

TMP

I WILL PROBABLY
FINISH A DAY
OR TWO EARLY,
IF THIS
KEEPS UP.

I GOT
SOME GOOD
ONES.

I WILL LET
BATTŌSAI
LINGER IN
ANGUISH UNTIL
THEN.

THE STRIKE
WILL BE
NINE DAYS
HENCE, AS
PLANNED.

GREAT, BUT
THERE'S
NO NEED
TO HURRY.

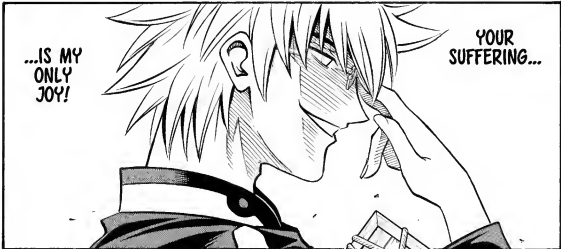


AND
YOU'VE
TAKEN
MY
SISTER
FROM
ME.

YOU'VE
TAKEN
HAPPINESS
FROM MY
SISTER.

YOU'VE
TAKEN
LIFE
FROM MY
SISTER.

SUFFER, BATTŌSAI.



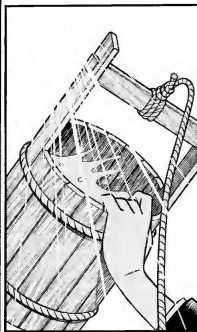
...IS MY
ONLY
JOY!

YOUR
SUFFERING...



...CAN NO
LONGER
BE
STOPPED...

...THIS
MAN...



THIS ONE
CAN'T
AVOID
FIGHTING...

BUT...

NINE
MORE
DAYS...



OH.



KENSHIN.

GOOD
MORNING.

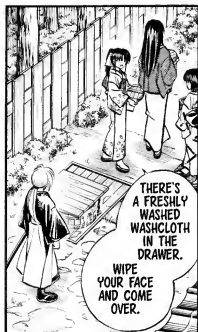


OH...THIS
ONE HAS HAD
NO APPETITE
SINCE LAST
NIGHT, SO—

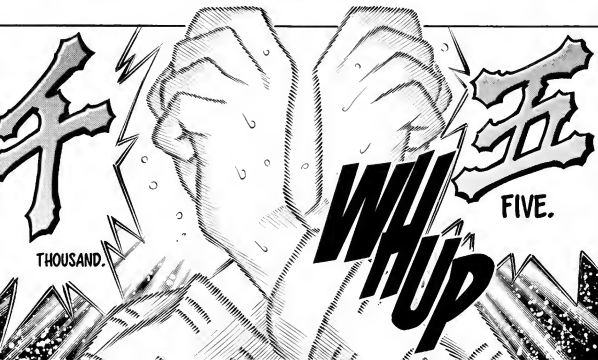
NO,
KEN-SAN.

WELL, IT'S
ACTUALLY
NOON
ALREADY.

LET'S
ALL EAT
IN THE
DOJO SINCE
THERE'RE
SO MANY
OF US.



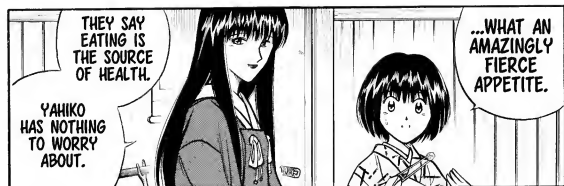
YOU
WILL HAVE TO
MAKE YOURSELF
EAT AT LEAST
A LITTLE, OR ELSE
YOU WILL GET
FATIGUED IN
NO TIME.













KENSHIN
...?

UHN...



THAT'S
RIGHT...



THE
UNCHANGED
SCENT OF
LIFE...



...THE USUAL
BICKERING.



THERE IS
NOTHING
TO DO
BUT FIGHT
FOR THE
PRESENT.

DO NOT
GET HELD
BACK IN
THE PAST...

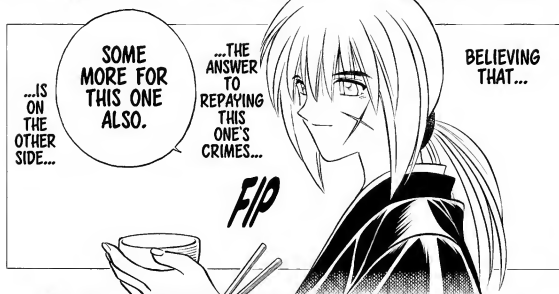
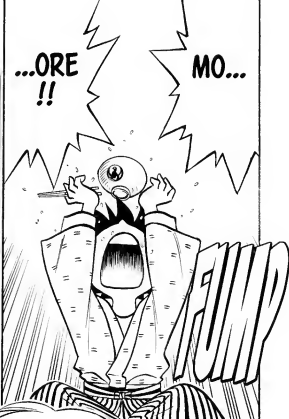


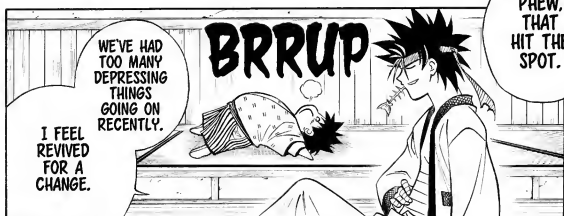
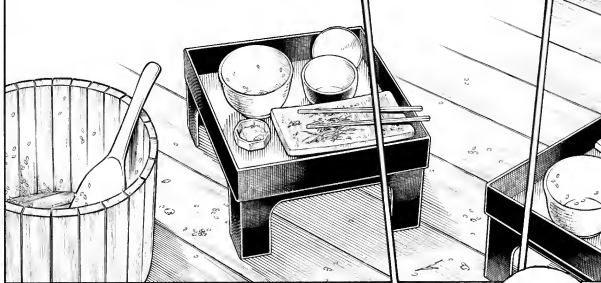
FIGHT
FOR THIS.



TO
PROTECT
THE
PRESENT.







WE'VE HAD
TOO MANY
DEPRESSING
THINGS
GOING ON
RECENTLY.

I FEEL
REVIVED
FOR A
CHANGE.

BRRUP

PHEW,
THAT
HIT THE
SPOT.



TOMOE-
SAN'S
WORDS
...



I
UNDERSTAND
YOUR
FEELINGS,
BUT IT'S
IMPOSSIBLE.
THE ONLY
PERSON
WHO CAN STOP
YUKISHIRO
ENISHI IS
TOMOE-SAN, AND
SHE IS DEAD.



I JUST
HOPE
NOTHING
HAPPENS
IN NINE
DAYS...

MURMUR



**KENSHIN
!**

ONLY
HER WORDS
WILL REACH
YUKISHIRO
ENISHI'S
EARS.

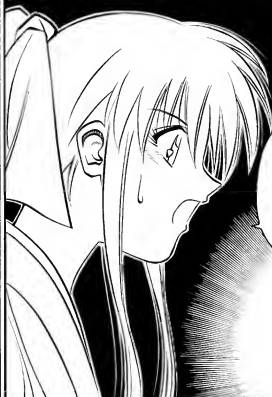


CAN'T WE
PREVENT
THE
FIGHTING...BY
TALKING...?

IF WE CAN
PROVE THAT
TOMOE-SAN
DIDN'T HOLD A
GRUDGE AGAINST
KENSIN...
MAYBE...



...IT WILL
STOP
YUKISHIRO
ENISHI.



WHERE
IS...

WHERE'S
TOMOE-SAN'S
DIARY?!

TOMOE-SAN
RECORDED
HER REAL
FEELINGS.



...WAS
LEFT BY THIS
ONE AT THE
TEMPLE WHERE
TOMOE'S GRAVE
IS...

...UPON
LEAVING KYOTO
AFTER THE
BATTLE OF
TOBA-FUSHIMI.



...
THE
DIARY...

IT WOULD BE
IMPOSSIBLE FOR
YAHIKO OR
TSUBAME-CHAN,
AND MEGUMI-SAN
HAS HER
PATIENTS.

SANOSUKE WILL
BE NECESSARY
TO THE FIGHTING
FORCE...



KYOTO...

WHAT SHOULD
I DO? I CAN'T
LEAVE KENSIN
TO GO GET IT
ON MY OWN.

I
CAN
ASK...!







YOU
MAY OR
MAY NOT
GET THERE
IN TIME...

...BUT SHE
WANTS OUR
HELP.



I DON'T
KNOW THE
DETAILS, BUT
HIMURA-KUN
SEEMS TO
BE IN
QUITE A
BIND.



AND IF
NEEDED,
GIVE
HIMURA-KUN
A HAND.

AOSHI.

I WILL
WORRY IF
MISAO IS
ALONE. GO
WITH HER.



...

I DON'T
THINK THAT
MAN WILL
NEED
HELP,
BUT...

TMP



...OKAY!

I JUST
NEED TO GO
TO THIS TEMPLE
AND GET THE
DIARY!

...I SHOULD
GO AND TAKE
CARE OF MY
PROMISE TO
HAVE TEA...



IDIOT!
BE
SENSOUS
!

SMACK

TRAVELING
ALONE WITH
AOSHI-
SAMA.
♡

THA-THUMP
THA-THUMP

SO, WITH
A STRAND
OF HOPE
THAT MAY
STOP
YUKISHIRO
ENISHI...

...AOSHI
AND MISAO
ARE OFF
TO TOKYO!

TUMP



Rurouni Kenshin



Act 182
Confession
(Part 1)



和月宏

THE
NINTH
DAY.

THERE HAVE
BEEN NO
SIGNS OF
AMBUSH
BY ENISHI
DURING
THE PAST
EIGHT DAYS.

THOUGH
ANXIOUS AND
NERVOUS,
EACH IS
GOING ON
WITH THEIR
DAILY LIVES—

THOUSAND!

WHUP
五
FIFTY!

THAT'S
ENOUGH!!

NOW DO
5,000
MORE!

OKAY!

TOO
EASY...

ONE
MORE
DAY
UNTIL
THE
BATTLE.



FIRST, I'LL
SHOW YOU
HOW IT'S
DONE. COME
AT ME,
YAHIKO!!

ALL
RIGHT!

ALL
RIGHT, I'LL
REWARD
YOU BY
SHOWING
YOU THE
FORM.

ALL
RIGHT
!!

TP

YOU LOOK
LIKE YOU HAVE
A LOT OF
NEGATIVE
ENERGY.

GRUDGE
BUILDING
UP UNTIL
NOW?

TROMP TROMP TROMP
DIE, FOOL!

YAAAAH
!!

HAH!!!

FLASH



KAMIYA
KASSHIN-
RYU'S
SECRET—

...WITH
THE
BACK
OF HER
HANDS
?!

SHIRAHA
DORI—
CATCHING
A
BLADE...

HAWA-
TARI—
BLADE
CROSS-
ING!!



IF
I GET IT
RIGHT,
VICTORY IS
CERTAIN!!

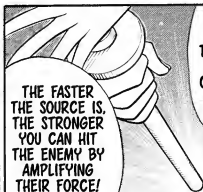
THE MOST
EXTREME
FORM OF
THE REACTIVE
SWORD.

UNLIKE NORMAL
SHIRAHA DORI,
THIS MOVE CAN
BE DONE WITH
A SWORD IN
YOUR HAND.

IT IS THE
GREATEST ADVANTAGE
OF "THE DEFENSE OF
THE SECRET—
BLADE HALTING."



IF YOU
MAKE A
MISTAKE,
DEATH IS
UNAVOIDABLE...
BUT...



THE FASTER
THE SOURCE IS,
THE STRONGER
YOU CAN HIT
THE ENEMY BY
AMPLIFYING
THEIR FORCE!

AND "THE
OFFENSE OF
THE SECRET—
BLADE
CROSSING" CAN
BE DERIVED
FROM THERE.



THE SECRET "HAWATARI" IS DIFFICULT ENOUGH. I HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO USE IT IN A BATTLE OR A MATCH.

I TOLD YOU, IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE, DEATH IS UNAVOIDABLE!

DON'T YOU FORGET THAT!





HUH?

KENSHIN?



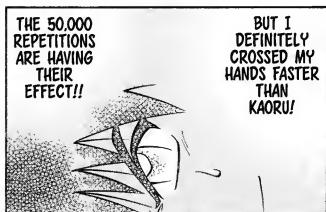
DON'T USE
THIS IN
BATTLE UNTIL
YOU KNOW
YOU CAN
DO IT
WELL...



SHE SLAMMED
ME IN THE
STOMACH
PRETTY HARD.
A LITTLE LOWER
WOULD HAVE REALLY
KILLED ME

GASP GASP

UGH.



THE 50,000
REPETITIONS
ARE HAVING
THEIR
EFFECT!!

BUT I
DEFINITELY
CROSSED MY
HANDS FASTER
THAN
KAORU!



BUT ALL I CAN
DO ALONE IS
CROSS MY ARMS?



RESUME
TRAINING!

WHUP

OKAY!

WHUP

WHUP



YAHIKO,
I'M GOING
TO GO
LOOK, SO
CONTINUE
ON YOUR
OWN!

KENSHIN
IS GONE.

DASH



KENSHIN?



VISITING?
WHO?

MOUSTACHE
GLASSES.



MOUSTACHE
...

OH!



YEAH, HE
SUDDENLY
LEFT THE
DOJO...

AND I
COULDN'T
FIND HIM
ANYWHERE
IN THE
HOUSE—

KENSHIN
WAS JUST
HERE
VISITING.



THERE
IS NOTHING
TO BE
SORRY
ABOUT.

I AM FROM
A SAMURAI
BACKGROUND,
AND EXPERIENCED
THE BOSHIN
AND SEINAN WARS.
AN INJURY OR
TWO IS NOTHING—

I AM
SO SORRY
FOR WHAT
HAPPENED.

I HEARD
EVERYTHING
FROM
HIMURA-SAN.

浦
村
様

URAMURA-SAMA



WE MAY NOT
BE OF ANY
USE, BUT IF THE
POLICE CAN DO
ANYTHING...

...WE
WILL COME
TO HIS
AID.

PLEASE TELL
HIMURA-SAN.



SHE WILL
UNDERSTAND
SOME DAY—

AND PLEASE
DO NOT
MIND MY
DAUGHTER.

SHAA

...



EVERYONE IS RECOVERING FROM THEIR WOUNDS, AND MAEKAWA-SENSEI SAYS THAT, "SWORDSMEN NATURALLY HAVE BATTLES, WHATEVER THE REASONS," AND DOESN'T HOLD ANY GRUDGE AGAINST KENSHIN...



...BUT THIS INCIDENT HAS MADE HIM FEEL HIS AGE AND WEAKNESS PAINFULLY, AND HE IS PASSING THE DOJO ONTO A SUCCESSOR AND RETIRING.



I AM
THINKING
OF AN
ALTERNATIVE
PLAN.

BUT...

...HOW
IS YOUR
RIGHT
HAND?

IT
SURE
WON'T BE
READY BY
TOMOR-
ROW.

I'M
WAITING
TO BE
SEEN BY
SOMEBODY.

I'LL GO
LOOK
AROUND
TOWN.
HOW
ABOUT
YOU?

ZEN
A

YOU ONLY
NEED TO
WORRY
ABOUT
KENSIN.

DON'T
WORRY
ABOUT
ME.

HOW
LONG DOES
SHE PLAN TO
KEEP ME
WAITING?

TP

NOW...
THAT
VIXEN...

PLEASE,
TAKANI-
SENSEI.

HEY.

RIGHT NOW,
WE NEED EVERY
SINGLE DOCTOR
WE CAN GET
TO HELP THE
PEOPLE IN
AIZU.

AS YOU KNOW, THE
AIZU REGION WAS THE
MAIN FORCE OF THE
SHOGUNATE DURING THE
BAKUMATSU, AND NOW
IT'S SUFFERING THE
EFFECT OF THE NEW
GOVERNMENT'S
GRUDGE.

LAW
ENFORCEMENT IS
WEAK, THE LANDS
ARE WASTING, AND
THE PEOPLE ARE
CRUSHED BY FAMINE
AND DISEASE...

IS IT
THAT
BUSINESS
WITH
HIMURA-
KUN...?

I KNOW. I DO
PLAN TO GO
BACK TO AIZU
EVENTUALLY,
AND IT IS A
DOCTOR'S
DUTY TO HELP
THOSE IN
NEED.

BUT I
CAN'T JUST
YET...

THESE ARE
THINGS TO
CONSIDER.
WHAT DO
YOU THINK?

TO BE
HONEST, LETTING
MEGUMI-KUN
GO WILL BE A
DISAPPOINTMENT,
BUT IT SHOULD
BE EASIER FOR
HER TO FIND
HER FAMILY
IN AIZU...

I WILL
REGRET IT
FOREVER...

YES...
UNLESS I
WITNESS
THE
RESOLUTION
...



SHE IS
LOOKING
INTO THE
FUTURE...

UNEX-
PECTEDLY
...

FITTING
FOR A
22-YEAR-
OLD.
I GUESS.

SCRITCH
SCRITCH



WHERE
HAS HE
GONE?

SERIOUSLY
...

KAORU-
CHAN?

TMP
TMP
TMP

TAE-
SAN!

AND
TSUBAME-
CHAN.





BUT...I'M SO SORRY...
BECAUSE OF US,
AKABEKO...

WHAT
ARE YOU
SAYING?

I
HEARD THE
STORY FROM
TSUBAME-CHAN,
AND IT'S
NOTHING YOU
NEED TO
APOLOGIZE FOR.



ALREADY
RESUMING
BUSINESS!!
A MODEL
BUSINESS-
WOMAN!

TEE HEE,
SAY
MORE.
SAY MORE!



HERE
YOU GO,
KAORU-CHAN.

Akabeko
Re-opened
at a
temporary
site.



SO DON'T
WORRY ABOUT
IT ANYMORE.

UMM...



OH
YES, HAVE
YOU SEEN
KENSHIN?

WHY DO
YOU SEEM
A LITTLE
FRANTIC?



REALLY!
WHERE
TO?

NO
IDEA.

KENSHIN
JUST CAME...
...APOLO-
GIZED, AND
LEFT.



BESIDES,
WHAT'S
BROKEN IS
BROKEN.

ALL WE
NEED TO DO
IS START
OVER.





ME
TOO.

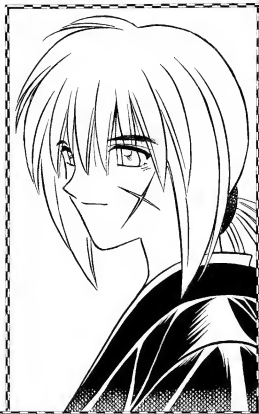


KAW

KAW



Rurouni Kenshin



Act 183

**Confession
(Part 2)**



KAW

KAW



SORRY
TO HAVE
WORRIED YOU
UNNECESSARILY.

SO
TSUBAME-
DONO
TOLD
YOU.

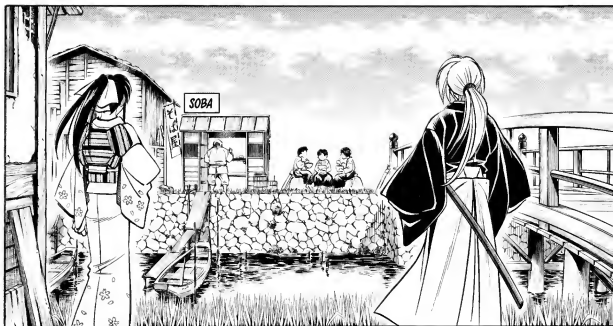
I'M SORRY
TO HAVE
INTERRUPTED
YOU.

UM...



HEY,
KEN—









THESE
DAYS, WHEN
I SEE YAHIKO
AND THOSE
KIDS...

...I THINK
KENJUTSU
WILL GRADUALLY
CHANGE FROM
TEACHING "SKILL
WITH A SWORD"
TO TEACHING
"THE WAY OF
THE SWORD."
REMAINING
IN THE WORLD...

A LONG TIME
AGO, YOU SAID, "A
SWORD IS A
WEAPON. WHATEVER
PRETTY NAMES
YOU GIVE IT,
SWORDSMANSHIP
IS A WAY
TO KILL."

"...BUT IN
THE FACE OF
SUCH AWFUL
TRUTH, THE
NAÏVE LIE SHE
TELLS IS MUCH
BETTER."



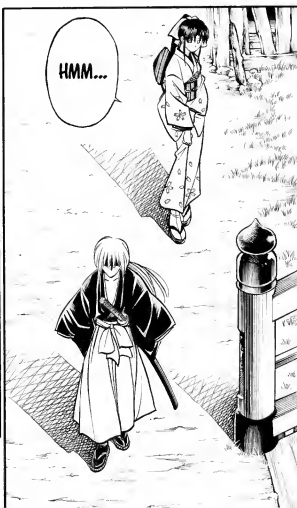
IS IT
LIKE
THAT...?

YEP!



IT WILL
BECOME
MORE AND
MORE
PEACEFUL...

...AND
THE NAÏVE
LIE WILL
BECOME THE
TRUTH...



HE WILL BECOME
A FAMOUS
SWORDSMAN ONE
DAY, TAKING FLIGHT
INTO THE WORLD
OF MEIJI THROUGH
THE DOJO'S GATES.



YAHIKO HAS
GROWN AT A
TREMENDOUS
SPEED THIS
PAST YEAR,
TRAINING IN
KENJUTSU.

...AND WILL
MAKE USE OF
HER MEDICAL
KNOWLEDGE TO
HELP AS MANY
PEOPLE AS
SHE CAN.



MEGUMI-DONO
WILL GO TO
AIZU TO FIND
HER FAMILY
SOME DAY...

HE WILL
CHARGE INTO
THE GREATER
WORLD NOT
SO FAR IN
THE FUTURE.



SANOSUKE HAS BEEN
SPENDING HIS TIME
WITH US, BUT HE IS
NOT THE TYPE TO BE
CONFINED TO TOKYO.

THEY WILL
EVENTUALLY
START WALKING
THEIR OWN
...LIVING
THEIR
OWN
LIVES.

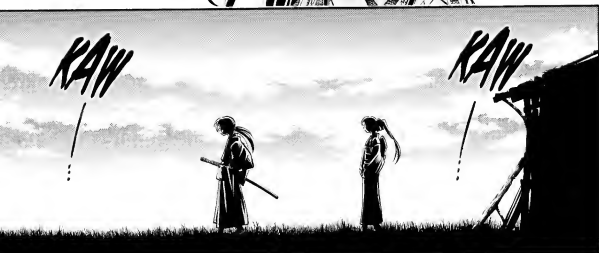
THE
OTHERS
ARE ALL
THE SAME...



IT
WILL BE
LONELY, BUT
THAT'S HOW
IT IS...

IT IS NOT
PARTING, BUT
EMBARKING
ON A
JOURNEY...

IT IS
NOT THE
END, BUT A
BEGINNING...



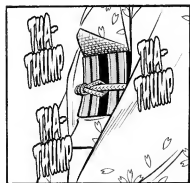
BUT...

...





THA-THUMP



IT WAS
NOTHING!
FORGET
IT!!

HA HAHA

I'M
SORRY!

I...

L-LET'S
GO HOME.
EVERYONE
WILL BE
WORRIED...

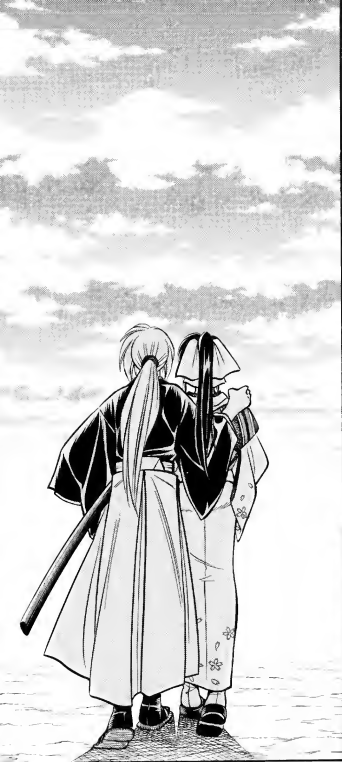
TMP TMP TMP TMP

NOW IS THE
TIME TO PUT
EVERY EFFORT
INTO GETTING
THROUGH THE
BATTLE
TOMORROW.

...DO YOU
REMEMBER...

WHEN
RETURNING TO
TOKYO FROM THE
BATTLE IN KYOTO,
THIS ONE SAID,
"IT'S GOOD TO
BE HOME"...

FSH



YES...
IT IS...



THAT IS
THE FIRST
TIME THOSE
WORDS HAVE
BEEN SAID
SINCE
BECOMING A
RUROUNI...



...IS
THAT
RIGHT...?



AFTER LOOKING
FOR A WEEK IN
ALL THE SOBA
PLACES IN TOKYO,
I FIND YOU
AT A BOOTH.
SHEESH!

YOU SAID MAKE
CONTACT AT
A SOBA PLACE.
BUT WILL YOU
PLEASE SPECIFY
WHICH ONE
FROM NOW ON?!



YOU MADE ME
YOUR SUBORDINATE,
AND NOW
TREAT ME LIKE
THAT!!

I RE-
MEMBER
NOW.
OH YES.

GYAA!

I'M CHŌ
OF THE
TEN
SWORDS
!!

WHO
ARE
YOU?

I CAN'T KILL
THE TARGET
WHEN I
FIND HIM...

OF
COURSE. THE
KILLINGS
ARE MY
JOB.

TELL ME YOUR
BUSINESS BEFORE
YOU START
NAGGING.

ARE YOU
REALLY
THE
POLICE?

I'LL
LEAVE
IT
HERE.

THANKS.

I'M
GETTING
SERIOUSLY
FED UP.
I'M GONNA
HIT THE
ROAD
SOON!

FWISH

THIS
IS THEIR
LAIR IN
JAPAN.

IT WAS
A TOUGH
JOB, BUT
I FOUND
THEM.

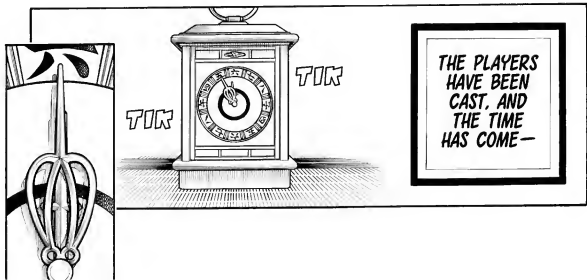
AND THE
HEAD HONCHO
SEEMS TO BE
THERE FOR
PERSONAL
BUSINESS.

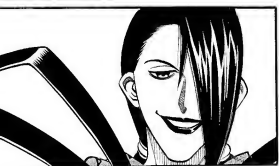
PERSONAL
BUSINESS?

HEH

...THE BLACK
MARKET
WEAPONS
ORGANIZATION
THAT SOLD THE
IRONCLAD
"RENGOKU"
TO THEM—!

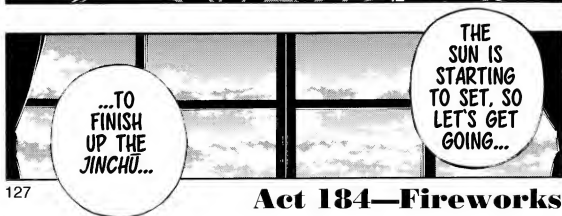
THE MOST
IMPORTANT
ISSUE THAT
REMAINS
FROM THE
SHISHIO
INCIDENT
...





Rurouni Kenshin





Act 184

Fireworks

伸
月
宏

THE
MOMENT
WE'VE
WAITED
FOR, AS
THOUGH
EACH
DAY
WAS A
THOUSAND
WINTERS.
LET'S GO
FIRE IT
UP!!

TWIND!



THE
SUN...
HAS
SET...



DID YOU
TAKE THE
LITTLE GIRL
HOME?

YEAH.



IT WAS
A LITTLE
CRUEL TO
TSUBAME-
CHAN.

WE HAVE
NO CHOICE.
IT'S TOO
DANGEROUS
HERE.



YEAH.

FOUR
OR FIVE
HOURS
LEFT OF
"TODAY"...



THIS
ONE WILL
LEAD THE
DEFENSE.

MAKE
DEFENDING
YOURSELVES
THE
PRIORITY.

OKAY!

KAORU-DONO
AND YAHIKO
WILL STAY
INSIDE THE
DOJO.

USE YOUR
JUDGMENT
TO STRIKE
AS NEEDED.

SANO, YOU
WILL DEFEND
THE DOJO.
STATIONED IN
THE FRONT
YARD.

NO
PROB-
LEM!

THUNK

EXCEPT...



...YOU
WILL BE
ALLOWED
TO STRIKE
OUT.

YAHIKO, IF
AND ONLY IF
THE DIRE
MOMENT
COMES...

A...ALL
RIGHT!!



I STILL
THINK
IT'S TOO
EARLY...
MAYBE
YOU
SHOULD RE-
CONSIDER?

THINK
SO.
PROBABLY.

IS
THAT
OKAY?

ALL
RIGHT,
LET'S
GO!!

VOOOOSH



DON'T
LOOK AT
ME WHEN
YOU SAY
THAT!

AS LONG
AS YOU
DON'T GET
YOURSELF
KILLED.

I'LL
HEAL
ANY WOUND
...



PLEASE
TREAT
THE
WOUNDED.

MEGUMI-
DONO WILL
BE INSIDE
THE DOJO
ALSO.

LEAVE
IT TO
ME.

UM...
AND
ME?





WE'LL
ALL SEE
YOU
AGAIN.

DON'T
WORRY. NONE
OF US ARE
GOING TO
DIE.



...AS
YAHIKO
SAYS.

...IT IS
JUST...



OKAY.



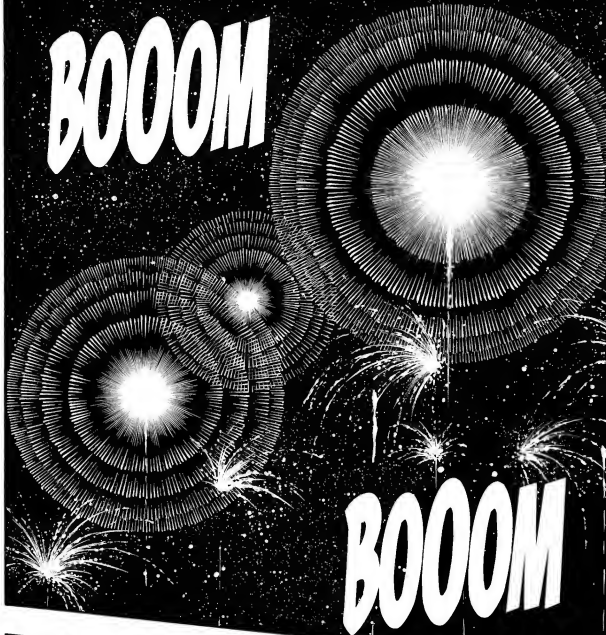


THAT'S RIGHT.
NOBODY WILL BE
ALLOWED TO DIE.
EVERYONE
WILL LIVE—

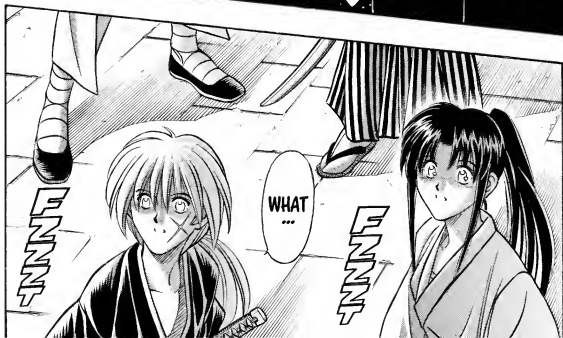




BOOOM



BOOOM





THE WIND
CHILLS,
AND THE
SKY IS
HIGHER...

IT QUICKLY
TURNS TO
WINTER EACH
YEAR AFTER
THIS
FESTIVAL...



OH,
THEY'RE
FIRE-
WORKS!
STARTLED
ME.

OH YEAH,
TODAY'S
THE
SUMMER
FESTIVAL.

I THINK



NO...

IT'S
NOT!

IT'S
NOT
A
DUD!



THAT
FIREWORK
LOOKS
ODD...IS IT
A DUD?

OH?

LOOK AT
THE ONE
UNDER
IT...



THESE
ARE—
!!!





...TIME
FOR
JINCHŪ.

IT'S...

HOT...

HOW
DO THEY
HAVE
SOME-
THING
LIKE
THIS?

THE
TOP-NOTCH
TECHNOLOGY
FIRST USED IN
THE SEINAN
WAR...

NO
WAY...!!

...AIR
BALLOONS
?!







BOOM!



...AS A
REWARD
FOR
WORKING
FOR US
UP TO
NOW.

LET'S
LET HIM
DO
WHAT HE
WANTS...

HEH



HEE
HEE...

IS IT
OKAY TO
LET HIM
GO LIKE
THAT ?



HERE
THEY
COME!!

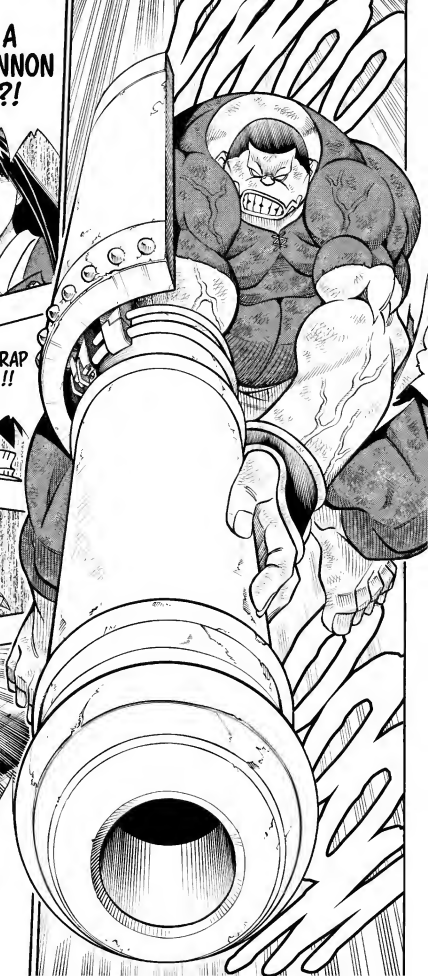
HE'S
GOING TO
FIRE
FROM
THERE?

A
CANNON
?!

CRAP
!!

NO
!!

WASH
SANO
!!





FIST?



FLIGHT !!

LEND
THIS ONE
YOUR
FIST!!



ALL
RIGHT
!!





Rurouni Kenshin





KEN-
SAN!

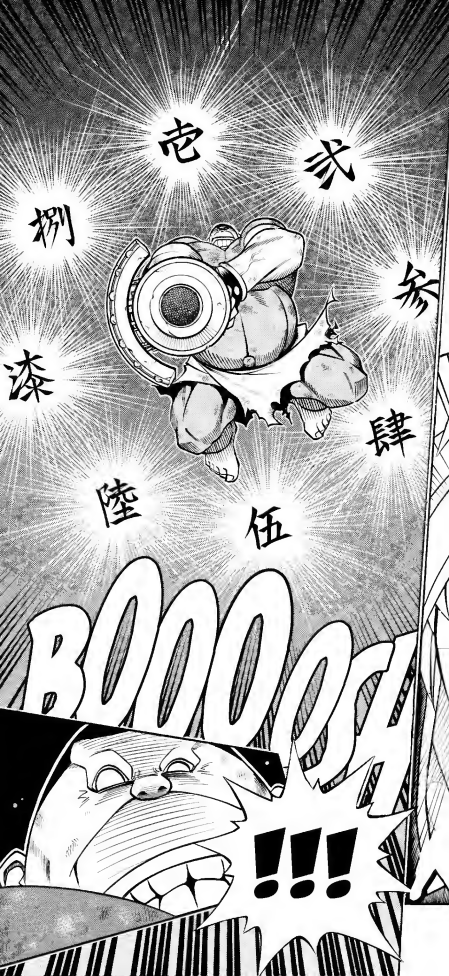


HE'S
FLYING
!!!



Act 185—Vs. the Armstrong Cannon





HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ!





和伸
月彦



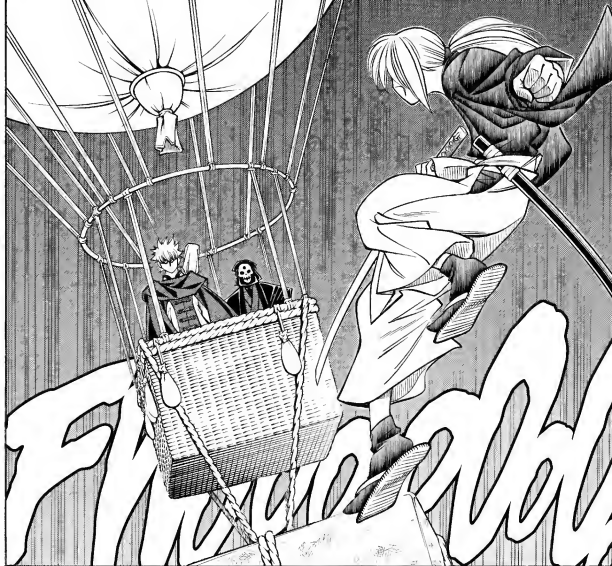
りゅう
せん

りゅう
せん

Act 185

Vs. the Armstrong Cannon

KUZU-RYUSEN—NINE-
HEADED DRAGON!!



BUT WITH
THE CANNON
ON HIS
RIGHT ARM,
KUJIRANAMI
HAS A
CHANCE FOR
A ONE-SHOT
COME-
BACK.

THEY
GOT THE
FIRST
STRIKE...



...NO
MORE
HESITATION
TO
FIGHT.

IT
LOOKS
LIKE
THERE
IS...



KENSHIN!

TMP
TMP
TMP





IT IS
NOW THIS
ONE'S
CHANCE.

HURRY
INTO
THE
DOJO.

...KAORU-
DONO.

GOOD,
HE'S NOT
"BATTOSAI."

"THIS
ONE" —

SIGH

THIS IS
THE HIMURA
KENSIN WHO
CONQUERED
BATTOSAI —

IN
THAT STATE,
VICTORY
IS CERTAIN.
UNLESS THE
OPPONENT
IS STRONGER
THAN
SHISHIO!

YAHIKO,
WATCH
CARE-
FULLY.

IF YOU
MISS THIS
APPEARANCE,
THE FIRST
SINCE THE
BATTLE IN
KYOTO, WHO
KNOWS WHEN
YOUR NEXT
CHANCE
WILL BE.



THE
MORE YOU
GET INTO IT,
THE DEEPER
I CAN SCAR
YOU WITH MY
JINCHŪ!!



THAT'S
GOOD,
BATTŌSAI!



GUOOOOOH!!!



TAK

...GU



WHOOOOO

BATTŌ...

...SAIII
!

THOO!!!



WHAT
IS
THAT?!



!



HEH

...WELL, I
KNEW THEY
WERE GOING
TO HAVE A
CANNON...



SNAP

GET IN
THE DOJO,
QUICKLY!

IT'S
COMING!!



TMP





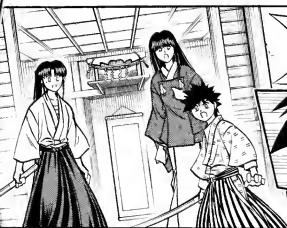
AND
I CAN'T
LEAVE IT
ALL UP TO
KENSIN!!!

BA

BOON

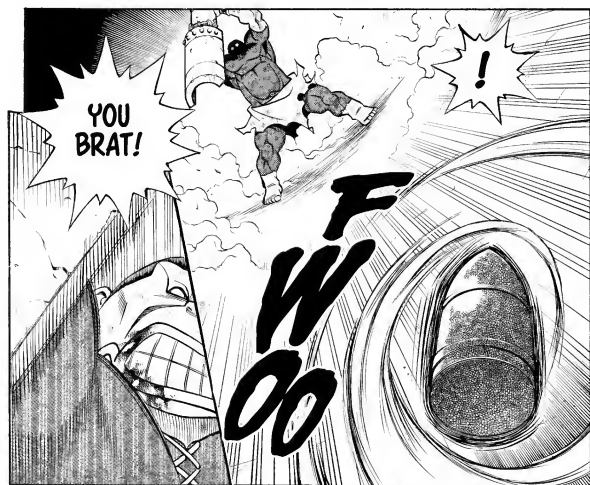


THAT'S THE
PLAN HE WAS
TALKING ABOUT
YESTERDAY
...?!



ZANBA-
TŌ!





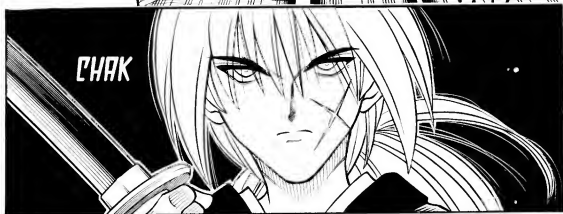


...CANNON.

RELOAD...









SO
STRONG!!

THOSE TWO
TOGETHER ARE
STRONGER
THAN THE
ARMSTRONG
CANNON!!

I DON'T
WORK WELL
WITH OTHERS, BUT
TWO AGAINST TWO
SOUNDS BETTER
THAN TWO
AGAINST ONE.

THIS IS
INTERESTING.
WE SHOULD
TEAM UP
FOR NOW!



ALL
RIGHT,
LET'S
GO!!

THE
SECOND
WAVE!!

"FREE TALK"

Long time no see, this is Watsuki. We've finally found a place to move to, but now I can't make time to get ready, and I'm struggling. On top of that, perhaps due to the change in the seasons, or due to age, I've been falling into deeper sleeps. Even if I set six alarm clocks, or the phone keeps ringing, I can't wake up. If I force myself up, I get a bad headache for the rest of the day. I am so trapped.

But even so, I still make time for figures and games. The figures are in a dormant stage. I am waiting for "Manga Freak" and "Manga Cyber Violator" from "Manga Spawn 2," which are yet to be imported at the time I write this. I've said before, "Perhaps there will be figures with internal skeletons not showing the joints on the exterior," and according to the magazine I read the other day, they are coming up soon! There are no details yet, so I can't comment much. But the price of many millions of yen plus the blonde European look goes against Watsuki's...I LOVE black hair, which deters me from buying it. However, I would like to see it (of course, if it was Nakoruru. I would immediately buy it. How stupid). In terms of games, I am playing a little bit of Sega's "Virtual-On Oratorio Tangram." It's fun, but so many patterns of weapons make it complicated, confusing me. Once it comes out for the console, I will play more of it (I say this all the time now). Other than combat games, I would like to play RPGs, SLGs (simulation games), and ADVs (adventure games), but I can't do that while the series is ongoing. I have many things I want to do other than games, but the time is lacking. You can say "Time will never be available while you say there is no time," but I just really don't...Time passes so quickly that I feel like it flows differently just for me. This is a valuable experience, but I would like to be released soon.

However, there is a bit more until this work is completed, so I would like to keep working. I will see you in the next volume.



HA-
HAA
!!

RAIJIN
GURUMA-
THUNDER
GOD
WHEEL!!!

JUTSUSHIKI
MUTEKI-
RYŪ!

Act 136
Neo-Invulnerable
Gauntlets

FU
IP

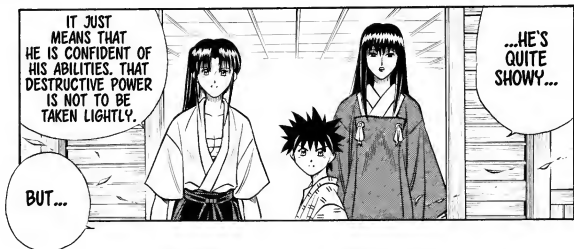
FU
IP

FU
IP

FU
IP



Act 186
Neo-Invulnerable
Gauntlets







THIS
ONE IS
YOUR
OPPONENT.

BATTŌSAI.



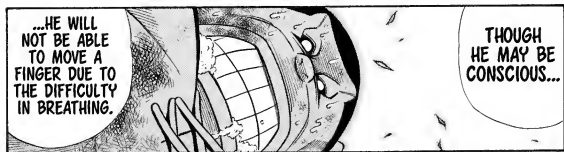
THE
IMPACT GOES
THROUGH THE
RIBS TO THE
LUNGS.

HA... UUMPH

THERE
IS A
VITAL POINT
UNDER
THE ARM.

KENSHIN,
KUJIRANAMI
IS—

IT'S
FINE.



...HE WILL
NOT BE ABLE
TO MOVE A
FINGER DUE TO
THE DIFFICULTY
IN BREATHING.

THOUGH
HE MAY BE
CONSCIOUS...



...SAI!!

BATTŌ...





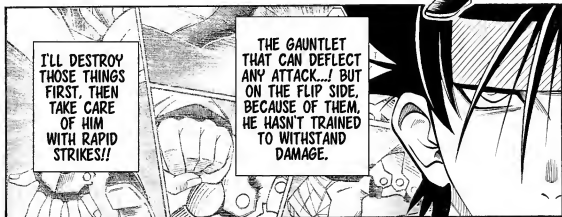
YOU
HAVE A
WEAPON
TODAY.

HA! I
DON'T
CARE.

TTP



NO MATTER
WHAT YOU
COME AT ME
WITH, I'LL
GIVE YOU NEW
APPRECIATION
OF MY
GAUNTLETS!

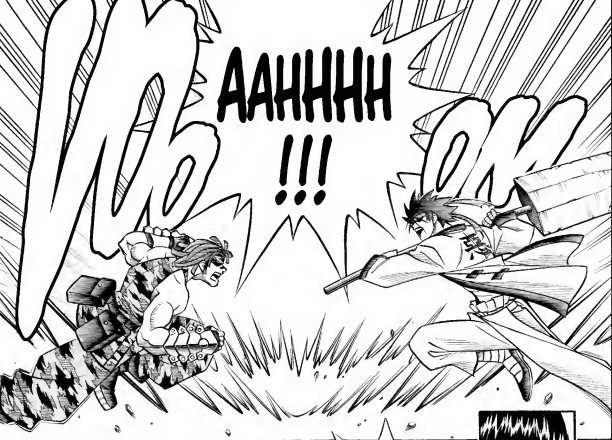


I'LL DESTROY
THOSE THINGS
FIRST, THEN
TAKE CARE
OF HIM
WITH RAPID
STRIKES!!

THE GAUNTLET
THAT CAN DEFLECT
ANY ATTACK...! BUT
ON THE FLIP SIDE,
BECAUSE OF THEM,
HE HASN'T TRAINED
TO WITHSTAND
DAMAGE.

...I WILL
COUNT
ON YOU
ONCE
AGAIN,
ZANBATŌ!

NOW THAT
I CAN'T USE
THE MASTERY
OF TWO
LAYERS...



RRRAAKK

...ZANBATŌ... ...THANKS...

...GOOD-BYE... AND THIS TIME...



WHAT?!



I TOLD
YOU, "NEW
APPRECI-
ATION!!

WHAT DO
YOU MEAN,
"WHAT"?
HA-HAA!!

BAASH

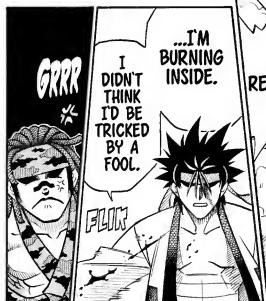
AS
MUCH
AS YOU
LIKE...

HEH

I'LL
GLADLY
USE IT!

INVULNERABLE
GAUNTLET,
REGENERATED
AS NEO-
INVULNERABLE
GAUNTLET!!

LOOK!
IMPROVED
SHAPE AND
PERFORMANCE
!!





KENSHIN!!



HOW? WHY
DO YOU
THINK
SO?



...HELPING
HIM WILL
OPEN
THESE
THREE
TO YOUR
ATTACKS.



WHY
WON'T
YOU
MOVE?

GOING
TO
WATCH
YOUR
FRIEND
DIE?

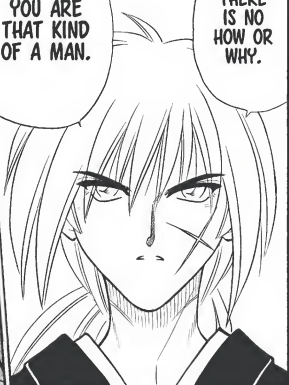




HEH

YOU ARE
THAT KIND
OF A MAN.

THERE
IS NO
HOW OR
WHY.



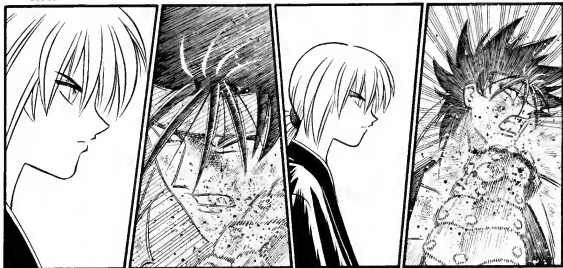
SO
YOU WILL
WATCH HIM
DIE.

THUNK

YOU
UNDERSTAND
WELL.

I SEE.

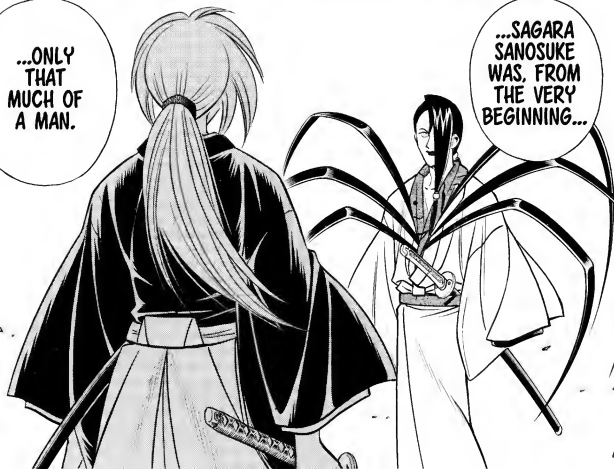




IF HE
DIES
HERE...

...ONLY
THAT
MUCH OF
A MAN.

...SAGARA
SANOSUKE
WAS, FROM
THE VERY
BEGINNING...







THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN FIGHT BY HIS SIDE!!

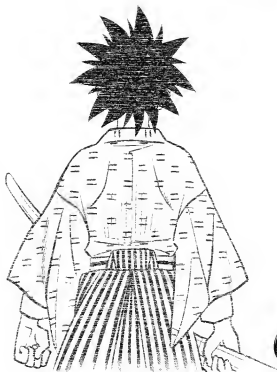
RAHHH !!

BUT SOMEDAY—

...NOW ISN'T THE TIME.

CLINCH

I WILL
GET
THERE
TOO—!!



EVEN
THOUGH
THIS ISN'T
A BUSY
AREA, IF
THINGS KEEP
DRAGGING ON,
PEOPLE WILL
NOTICE, AND
OUR JINCHU
WILL BE
COMPROMISED.

THE TWO
ARE ON
OPPOSITE
EXTREMES,
KEEPING
THINGS
AT A STAND-
STILL.



...AND THE
SLY OTOWA
WHO IS IN
"WAIT" MODE
UNTIL THE
OPPONENT
STRIKES OUT...



THE
OBVIOUSLY
UNINTEL-
LIGENT
"OFFEN-
SIVE"
BANJIN...

...THIS
MAY BE
BAD.

TK
BWR
AA
SH
BOOSH

WITH
IWANBŌ
VERSION
THREE...

—“SAVAGE
MODE”!



I
WILL
GO.

I
HAVE NO
CHOICE.

**To Be Continued in
Vol. 22: Battle On
Three Fronts**

GLOSSARY of the RESTORATION

A brief guide to select Japanese terms used in *Rurouni Kenshin*. Note that, both here and within the story itself, all names are Japanese style—i.e., last or “family” name first, with personal or “given” name following. This is both because *Kenshin* is a “period” story, as well as to decrease confusion—if we were to take the example of *Kenshin*’s *sakabatō* and “reverse” the format of the historically established assassin-name “*Hitokiri Battōsai*,” for example, it would make little sense to then call him “*Battōsai Himura*.”

Himura Kenshin

Kenshin’s “real” name, revealed to Kaoru only at her urging

Hiten Mitsurugi-ryū

Kenshin’s sword technique, used more for defense than offense. An “ancient style that pits one against many,” it requires exceptional speed and agility to master.

hitokiri

An assassin. Famous swordsmen of the period were sometimes thus known to adopt “professional” names—*Kawakami Gensai*, for example, was also known as “*Hitokiri Gensai*.”

Ikeda-ya Incident

A group of radical *Ishin Shishi* plot to burn Kyoto, assassinate government officials, and transfer the emperor to Chōshū, but an attack by the *Shinsengumi* derails the plan

Ishin Shishi

Loyalist or pro-Imperialist *patriots* who fought to restore the Emperor to his ancient seat of power

Kawakami Gensai

Real-life, historical inspiration for the character of *Himura Kenshin*

Kinmon Incident

A clash between the forces of Aizu and Chōshū

Bakumatsu

Final, chaotic days of the Tokugawa regime

Boshin War

Civil war of 1868-69 between the new government and the *Tokugawa Bakufu*. The anti-*Bakufu*, pro-Imperial side (the Imperial Army) won, easily defeating the Tokugawa supporters.

-chan

Honorific. Can be used either as a diminutive (e.g., with a small child—“*Little Hanako* or *Kentarō*”), or with those who are grown, to indicate affection (“*My dear...*”).

dō

In *kendo*, this is a strike to the stomach

-dono

Honorific. Even more respectful than *-san*; the effect in modern-day Japanese conversation would be along the lines of “*Milord So-and-So*.” As used by *Kenshin*, it indicates both respect and humility.

Edo

Capital city of the *Tokugawa Bakufu*; renamed *Tokyo* (“*Eastern Capital*”) after the Meiji Restoration

hakubaikō

The fragrance of white plum blossoms

-san

Honorific. Carries the meaning of "Mr.," "Ms.," "Miss," etc., but used more extensively in Japanese than its English equivalent (note that even an enemy may be addressed as "-san").

Shinsengumi

Elite, notorious, government-sanctioned and exceptionally skilled swordsman-supporters of the military government (*Bakufu*) which had ruled Japan for nearly 250 years, the *Shinsengumi* ("newly selected corps") were established in 1863 to suppress the *loyalists* and to restore law and order to the blood-soaked streets of *Kyoto*

shōgun

Feudal military ruler of Japan

shōgunate

See *Tokugawa Bakufu*

Toba Fushimi, Battle at

Battle near *Kyoto* between the forces of the new, imperial government and the fallen *shōgunate*. Ending with an imperial victory, it was the first battle of the *Boshin War*.

Tokugawa Bakufu

Military feudal government which dominated Japan from 1603 to 1867

Tokyo

The renaming of "*Edo*" to "*Tokyo*" is a marker of the start of the *Meiji Restoration*

-kun

Honorific. Used in the modern day among male students, or those who grew up together, but another usage—the one you're more likely to find in *Rurouni Kenshin*—is the "superior-to-inferior" form, intended as a way to emphasize a difference in status or rank, as well as to indicate familiarity or affection.

Kyoto

Home of the Emperor and imperial court from A.D. 794 until shortly after the *Meiji Restoration* in 1868

loyalists

Those who supported the return of the Emperor to power; *Ishin Shishi*

Meiji Restoration

1853-1868; culminated in the collapse of the *Tokugawa Bakufu* and the restoration of imperial rule. So called after Emperor Meiji, whose chosen name was written with the characters for "culture and enlightenment."

patriots

Another term for *Ishin Shishi*...and, when used by Sano, not a flattering one

rurouni

Wanderer, vagabond

sakabatō

Reversed-edge sword (the dull edge on the side the sharp should be, and vice versa); carried by *Kenshin* as a symbol of his resolution never to kill again

-sama

Honorific. The respectful equivalent of *-san*, *-sama* is used primarily in addressing persons of much higher rank than one's self...or, in a romantic sense, in addressing those upon whom one is crushing, wicked hard.